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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2007

In Today's Papers

Erdogan on His Meeting with Bush, Turkish Iraq Incursion

All papers report that Prime Minister Erdogan, visiting Rome as the guest of Prime Minister Romano Prodi, told a joint news conference with his Italian counterpart that Turkey might launch a military operation against the PKK "at any time," reiterating Turkey's determination to "eliminate" the terrorists operating in northern Iraq. Erdogan suggested timely intelligence from the United States could be key to future military operations in Iraq. "Turkey's patience has run out. We will work to destroy the PKK camps. The Turkish nation and Turks in Europe expect action on this issue. We will take the necessary steps, but we will not target civilians," Erdogan emphasized. Speaking about his Monday meeting with President Bush, Erdogan said he was pleased that both Ankara and Washington see the PKK militants as "a common enemy." "Now, what is an enemy? An enemy is an element to be eliminated," Erdogan said. Erdogan added he could not give details regarding military action against the PKK, because "that would only give information to the enemy." Turkish papers report expectations in Iraq of a major Turkish offensive have diminished following Monday's meeting between Bush and Erdogan, quoting the Kurdish regional administration Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani calling on the PKK to lay down arms or "bear the responsibility of future developments." Addressing a news conference yesterday, Barzani welcomed what he said were "positive" messages Erdogan issued after the meeting with President Bush in Washington earlier this week.

Meanwhile, mainstream Milliyet reports that on Wednesday, Erdogan met with the heads of Italy's defense and electronics giant "Finmecanica," helicopter firm "Agusta Westland," and automotive company "Fiat." Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul said Italians displayed interest in Turkish tenders for 60 cargo helicopters and the "Gokturk-1" satellite. The Turkish Defense Industry Executive Committee is to decide on the helicopter bids November 23, reports Milliyet.

Editorial Commentary on US-Turkey Cooperation against Terror

Huseyin Gulerce writes in the Islamist leaning daily Zaman: "The Bush-Erdogan summit provided a very good opportunity to keep Turkey away from falling into preset traps and wandering into adventures. Oddly enough, right before the summit, the overall atmosphere was: Turkey was talking about the urgent need for a cross border operation while PKK was working very hard to make it a reality. Following the positive outcome of the Bush-Erdogan summit, Turkey will carry out cross border operation in a limited scope with timely intelligence provided by the US, and this action will not be a comprehensive military operation. On the other hand, Turkey has to deal with both PKK terror and the Kurdish problem on its own, not with the help of the US or the others. This is our problem and we should be able to handle terrorism and its political side. With its recent election victory, AKP has an enormous chance to move forward in this regard. The government should speed up the democratization and the EU process without any delay."

Ali Bayramoglu comments in the Islamist leaning daily Yeni Safak: "At the current stage, the possibility of cooperation between Turkey and the US against PKK camps and activities in Northern Iraq is stronger than ever before. We have to watch and see if this cooperation produces any tangible results. However, circumstances also demonstrate the need for thinking about the second aspect of the problem, that is, how to end the Kurdish problem in a political context in Turkey. First of all, Turkey has to normalize relations with Iraqi Kurds and Barzani. Second, Turkey has to take steps toward paving the way for the PKK to lay down arms. This does not mean avoiding military steps, but other steps should go along with it, including an amnesty. When the political authority shows that kind of political will, undoubtedly it will be the end of the

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terrorism problem. Spain, Britain and France are good examples on how to end terrorism and transfer the issue to political arena."

Gul on PKK Terror, BTC, Armenia in Azerbaijan Visit

All papers report President Abdullah Gul, visiting Azerbaijan on an official trip, told a press conference in Baku on Wednesday that Turkey is planning to continue combating the PKK but does not plan to occupy Iraq. Responding to a question whether Turkey will drop plans to cross into northern Iraq after the US promised to provide intelligence in the fight against the PKK, Gul said: "Turkey has its own capacity in the region, which it is going to use if necessary." On another question, Gul said Turkey's ongoing fight against terrorism will not affect the security of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. Gul noted Kazakhstan's involvement in BTC would increase the project's value. Gul said the ground for the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway would be laid soon, which, together with the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, will boost development in the region. Gul also said article 301 of the penal code damages the image of Turkey and stressed that it should be amended.

Earlier in the day, President Gul addressed the Azerbaijani Parliament. Gul said as long as Armenia continues its efforts to promote the recognition of the 1915 events in the parliaments of other countries, normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations should not be expected. Gul said Turkey will not open its border with Armenia until occupied Azerbaijani lands are liberated.

Barzani to PKK: "Lay Down Arms Immediately"

Mainstream Milliyet reports that at a press conference in Erbil, the Prime Minister of Regional Kurdish Administration in Northern Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani, said the "PKK should immediately lay down arms and get involved in the political process otherwise it will suffer great damage". Barzani added that "Erbil should be included in the Washington-Ankara-Baghdad tri-partite mechanism. We are closely following PM Erdogan and backing his very positive statement in Washington saying 'instability in the region will not be in anybody's interest.' Barzani added that they started controlling the routes through which the PKK may get logistical support and also started keeping the airport under tight control."

Osman Ocalan: "PKK is becoming Iranian"
In an interview with mainstream Sabah, PKK's former leader Osman Ocalan said that "with the establishment of PJAK, the PKK has received many recruits from Iran. Already, 30 percent of the organization is Iranian. Israel is afraid of improved Kurdish-Shiite cooperation and is supporting PJAK under cover of the US. Israel's aim is an Iran-PKK war." Ocalan claimed that Turkey's declaration of a general amnesty will end the PKK.

Survey: One-Third of Married Turkish Women Beaten by their Husbands

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Aksam Radikal and Cumhuriyet report that a survey conducted by Istanbul's Bosphorus University and Sabanci University shows that one third of married Turkish women are battered by their husbands. 43 percent of illiterate women have been subjected to domestic violence while 12 percent of educated women, says the survey, adding that educated women mostly choose not to report acts of violence against them. More than 60 percent of the women complained that their husbands beat them because they made more money. The percentage of illiterate women in central and eastern parts of the country is 15,5 while this figure soars to 41,9 in east and southeast Turkey, according to the survey which canvassed the views of 1,800 married women in 56 provinces from January 2006-June 2007. Sent by BlackBerry Internet Service from Turkcell

TV Highlights

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NTV (7 am news)

Domestic News

- The main opposition CHP filed a proposal for parliamentary inquiry in connection with international companies' cyanide gold exploration in Kaz (Ida) Mountains in northwest Turkey.
- Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP is to pick Nurettin Demirtas and Emine Ayna as its new co-chairmen in an extraordinary congress Thursday. No foreign guests have been invited to the congress to be held in Ankara.
- The Turkish Parliament will continue Thursday to discuss a bill for the establishment of three nuclear plants by 2010.
- Mehmet Agar will run once again for the chairmanship of Democrat Party (DP). Agar had resigned from DP leadership after his party failed to enter the parliament in the latest general elections.

International News

- Asma Jahangir, a leading human rights lawyer, has been placed under house arrest in Pakistan. The police interrupted Jahangir's interview with Turkey's NTV television.
- Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, has welcomed the messages of the Turkish government for amending article 301 of the penal code.
- European justice and interior ministers are expected to agree Thursday that eight ex-Communist nations plus Malta are ready to join Continental Europe's Schengen system.
- Nigeria is seeking USD 44 billion in a court case against three international tobacco companies, British American Tobacco, Philip Morris and International Tobacco Limited, accused of promoting underage smoking.

WILSON